

Message Text

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PAGE 01 GENEVA 04702 01 OF 02 291646Z
ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-14 ISO-00 NEA-10 EA-12 OIC-02
CCO-00 CIAE-00 OTPE-00 FCC-02 INR-10 NSAE-00
OC-06 USIA-15 COME-00 BIB-01 FAA-00 CG-00 DOTE-00
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P 291628Z MAR 78
FM USMISSION GENEVA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7736
INFO AMEMBASSY MADRID

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 GENEVA 04702

E.O.11652:N/A
TAGS: ITU, ETEL
SUBJECT: ITU: MEETING OF AD HOC WORKING GROUP OF
ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL, MADRID, APRIL 5-7

REF: STATE 070156

1. AS DEPT AWARE, SUBJECT MEETING IS BEING HELD TO
DISCUSS COUNCIL'S METHODS OF WORK, KEEPING IN MIND DESIRE
OF SOME MEMBERS TO CUT LENGTH OF ITS ANNUAL SESSIONS
WHICH CURRENTLY RUN THREE WEEKS.

2. WE DO NOT VIEW THESE SESSIONS AS UNDULY LENGTHY SINCE,
IT MUST BE RECALLED THAT IN PARTICULAR ITU SITUATION,
ADMIN COUNCIL ACTS NOT ONLY AS ITU'S GOVERNING BOARD BUT
ALSO AS ITS "GENERAL ASSEMBLY" AS WELL. ITU'S REAL
"ASSEMBLY" - THE PLENIPOTENTIARY CONFERENCE - IS HELD AT
INTERVALS OF FROM FIVE TO TEN YEARS AND THE
ADMIN COUNCIL IS THE ONLY ELECTED OVERALL ADMINISTRATIVE
AND GOVERNING BODY AUTHORIZED TO ACT ON BEHALF OF THE
MEMBERSHIP AS A WHOLE DURING THIS PERIOD.

3. NONETHELESS, THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THERE IS ROOM FOR
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PAGE 02 GENEVA 04702 01 OF 02 291646Z

IMPROVEMENT IN COUNCIL'S WORKING METHODS AND THAT ITS
MEETINGS COULD BE BETTER ORGANIZED. TWO PAPERS CONTAINING
SUGGESTIONS HAVE ALREADY BEEN RECEIVED FROM EXPECTED
PARTICIPANTS IN AD HOC MEETING - FRANCE AND UK.

A. FRENCH MAKE FOLLOWING SUGGESTIONS:

(1) DOCUMENTATION: SUMMARIES SHOULD BE PRESENTED OF LENGTHY DOCUMENTS; ACTION DOCUMENTS SHOULD BE PRESENTED DIFFERENTLY THAN INFO DOCUMENTS; ALL DOCUMENTS SHOULD BE SENT OUT AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE.

(2) BUDGETARY MATTERS: BUDGET SHOULD BE CONSIDERED ON TWO YEAR BASIS; COUNCIL MEMBERS SHOULD AVOID LENGTHY DISCUSSION OF MINOR MATTERS; DOCUMENT SHOULD CONTAIN A COST BREAKDOWN OF VARIOUS ACTIVITIES AND ORGANS SUCH AS CCIS, ETC.

B. BRITISH PROPOSALS ARE:

(1) REDUCTION IN LENGTH OF SESSION MAY BE POSSIBLE;
(2) PREFER TO MAINTAIN PRESENT ONE-YEAR BUDGET SYSTEM RATHER THAN TWO YEAR CYCLE; (3) DRAFT BUDGET SHOULD BE DRAWN UP WITHIN LIMITS OF TORREMOLINOS CEILINGS; (4) BUDGET SHOULD CONTAIN BREAKDOWN OF COSTS OF VARIOUS ORGANS, SUCH AS CCIS; (5) MINOR MATTERS SHOULD BE DEALT WITH BY SMALL WORKING GROUPS RATHER THAN IN COMMITTEES OR PLENARIES; (6) IMPORTANT ITEMS SHOULD NOT BE DEFERRED UNTIL LAST WEEK OF MEETING; (7) VARIOUS DOCUMENTS PUBLISHED BY GENERAL SECRETARIAT NEED NOT APPEAR AS SPECIFIC COUNCIL DOCUMENTS; (8) DOCUMENTS SHOULD APPEAR EARLIER; (9) SUCH DOCUMENTS SHOULD HAVE A STANDARD LAYOUT: SUBJECT; PURPOSE; MATTERS FOR DECISION; FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS; OTHER OPTIONS, SECRETARIAT RECOMMENDATIONS; PLUS SUMMARY OF LENGTHY UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 03 GENEVA 04702 01 OF 02 291646Z

DOCUMENTS; (10) ALL DOCUMENTS CONCERNING STAFF REORGANIZATION SHOULD CLEARLY STATE FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS.

4. WHILE WE BELIEVE THE USG COULD SUPPORT MOST OF THE FOREGOING FRENCH AND UK PROPOSALS, THE MISSION HAS ONE CONCRETE PROPOSAL TO SUGGEST FOR CONSIDERATION OF AD HOC WORKING GROUP: ADMIN COUNCIL NOW MEETS FOR THREE WEEKS DURING WHICH PLENARY SESSIONS ARE INTERSPERSED WITH MEETINGS OF THREE COMMITTEES (1-FINANCE, 2-STAFF, 3-TECHNICAL COOPERATION). GENERALLY MOST OF FIRST TWO WEEKS ARE DEVOTED TO MEETINGS OF COMMITTEES 2 AND 3, WITH COMMITTEE 1 CONDUCTING MOST OF ITS ACTIVITY IN FINAL WEEK ON BASIS THAT IT CANNOT MAKE FINAL BUDGET DECISIONS BEFORE DECISIONS OF OTHER COMMITTEES WHICH HAVE BUDGETARY IMPLICATIONS ARE MADE. THIS METHOD SEEMS TO US TO BE PUTTING THE CART BEFORE THE HORSE. WE BELIEVE THAT IT WOULD BE PREFERABLE ACCORDINGLY FOR COMMITTEE 1 TO MEET THE FIRST WEEK TO MAKE MAJOR DECISIONS ON BUDGET AND PERHAPS TO MEET ONCE OR TWICE DURING FINAL WEEK TO MAKE ANY CHANGES AS RESULT OF WORK OF COMMITTEES 2 AND 3. ANOTHER PROBLEM WITH THREE WEEK DURATION OF MEETING IS

FACT THAT MANY MEMBERS ARE REPRESENTED BY HEADS OF
TELECOMMUNICATIONS ADMINISTRATIONS AND ARE RELUCTANT TO
HAVE THESE HIGH OFFICIALS AWAY FOR THREE WEEKS AT A STRETCH.
ACCORDINGLY, MISSION WOULD PROPOSE THAT ONLY COMMITTEE ONE
MEET FOR FIRST WEEK AND THAT FIRST PLENARY SESSION BE
HELD AT BEGINNING OF SECOND WEEK. THUS, MEMBERS COULD
SEND LOWER LEVEL OFFICIALS FOR FIRST WEEK AND WOULD NEED
TO HAVE HIGH LEVEL OFFICIALS PRESENT ONLY FOR LAST TWO
WEEKS. THIS MECHANISM HAS FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS BEEN USED
IN UNIVERSAL POSTAL UNION (UPU) WHERE IT APPARENTLY WORKS
SUCCESSFULLY.

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PAGE 01 GENEVA 04702 02 OF 02 291647Z
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UNCLAS SECTION 02 OF 02 GENEVA 04702

5. MISSION WOULD APPRECIATE DEPT'S THOUGHTS ON FOREGOING.
VANDEN HEUVEL

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